

YOU WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN

**Practical Thoughts, Strategies and Actions
For Finding a New Job in the Modern Economy**



by

William S. Lipsman

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This guide was prepared as a result of a job assistance program sponsored by North Suburban Synagogue Beth El in Highland Park, Illinois that started in 2009. The clergy and leadership of the congregation were aware that many members of the congregation were out of work or fearful about losing their positions. As a result, a synagogue committee organized a program consisting, initially, of once per month evening meetings with a speaker and time for networking. This was supplemented with a weekly Friday morning group meeting that quickly became the core of the program.

During the Friday morning meetings which continued until mid - 2012, each participant identified her or himself, stated her or his field, reviewed job search actions taken during the past week and made requests for help in networking, resume review or in dealing with specific issues. Guidance came from synagogue committee facilitators, but just as importantly, from other participants, as well.

The concepts, suggestions and ideas in this guide were developed by the facilitators at the Friday morning meetings, some based on prior professional experience and some developed as a result of observing the needs of participants.

While the program was developed to serve members of the Beth El congregation, from the beginning it was open to anyone, including members of other congregations and non-affiliated Jews, as well as people of other faiths.

The principal facilitators whose thoughts are included in this guide were Joanne Blumberg Axelrod, program coordinator, Robert Freeman, Susie Kessler, Eliezer Krumbein, PhD (Psychology), William S. Lipsman, Michael A. Nadler and Andrea Saffir.

THE AUTHOR

William S. Lipsman is a retired in-house counsel and human resources executive. His job search coaching derives from having lost a job mid-career and personally experiencing the emotions and challenges of finding a new position, and from serving as the head of the human resources function for an international food manufacturing company. These experiences have given him the perspective of both the job seeker and the prospective employer.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This guide contains practical thoughts, strategies and actions to help you find a new job in the modern economy. It contains suggestions on dealing with your emotions during your job loss and search for a new position, tools to use in organizing and implementing your search, and strategies on how to locate and land a new position.

- **Emotions**

Losing your job hurts. This guide explains that your emotional experience is common and provides suggestions on how to deal with it. The **INTRODUCTION** and **EMOTIONS OF JOB HUNTING** discuss the attitude, effort and actions you will need to find a new position. It also addresses the need to grieve your job loss and deal with other emotional issues in an honest and realistic manner.

- **Search Process**

A successful job search takes time and requires an organized and methodical approach. **FINDING YOUR NEW JOB** outlines reasonable time expectations and suggestions on how to organize your search. The section on **UNDERSTANDING HR** is designed to help you understand the hiring process from the employer's perspective.

- **Strategies**

The section on **STRATEGIES** provides some ideas on how to navigate the 21st century job market. These involve proactive steps by you to better identify suitable positions, including alternative ways of earning a living outside a traditional single employer full time model. This section also gives you ideas on how to have a better chance of being the person hired for such a position.

- **Job Search Tools**

This guide contains several sections on practical tools for implementing your job search. The section on **NETWORKING** describes the most important tool in any job search. This is followed by a section on **KEY MARKETING MATERIALS**, the informational and promotional

materials that you use in your networking activities. Once you have secured an interview with an employer, the section on **INTERVIEWING** will help you prepare so that you can land the job. The following section **HANDLING THE OFFER AND THE NEW JOB** takes you to the finish line and beyond.

- **Other Considerations**

The final two sections, **DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES** and **RESOURCES** provide background and elaboration on the modern job market and how to obtain information and help to address these challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Losing your job hurts. Besides the loss of income and benefits, you think you have lost your identity. Modern Americans take anywhere from 50% to 70% of their personal identity from what they do. Within the first few minutes of meeting a new person, you each ask each other what do you do, meaning what is your occupation? When you lose your job, you think you have lost your answer to that question. This guide seeks to help you create an answer for that question and addresses the issues, strategies, techniques and emotions of being out of work and finding a new position.

Will you find a job if you follow all the advice in this guide? Maybe. Let's be honest. There is no exact science to finding a new position. It is as much about serendipity as about focused, concerted effort. But the ideas in this guide will hopefully help you create a higher probability that serendipity will occur and you will find another position.

Will you find your ideal job? Maybe. But not likely. In the modern economy, there is no longer a perfect job however you define that for yourself. That is because neither employees nor employers have control over the work place. So many external events can affect your employment, such as a national financial crisis, the takeover of your employer, a change in managers, competition from China, or a new technology that renders your company's products obsolete. Like the rest of life, a job search is about setting priorities and making compromises. Your goal is to find a job where you receive acceptable compensation and benefits and a sense of personal achievement, while helping your employer achieve its goals.

- **It's Not About You**

Your goal is NOT finding a job that meets all YOUR criteria. Your goal is demonstrating how your education, skills and experience will help the prospective employer achieve its business goals. During your search, you have to think about other people – what do they need, how will they perceive you, and what will they remember about you from your conversation, resume or application? Put yourself in the shoes of other people and try to anticipate their likely reaction to you. This will force a self-assessment that is crucial in conducting a successful job search.

- **Positive Attitude**

Your attitude will play a big role in helping you find another position. Yes, you can be angry about your job loss and beat yourself up about what you could have done differently to prevent it. But after a short period of grieving, you need to look forward, not backward, and work at your job search.

Whether you realize it or not, your attitude is easily perceived by other people. It is transmitted in your facial expressions, your demeanor and body language, the words you choose in talking about a subject and your dress and personal grooming. Put on a happy face is not just a song title; it is an important technique for finding another job.

- **Effort**

YOU have to find your next job. Friends, counselors, outplacement personnel, recruiters and Human Resource managers are not going to find a job for you. They will all play important roles in your search as resources for your job search and as part of the community of people who can help you, if YOU make the effort.

You will hear people say that looking for a job is a full time job. They are correct. As with so much of life, you get out of it what you put into it. Just as when you were working in your last position, you need to apply to your search the behaviors and skills that made you successful. You need structure to your day, you need contact databases and a calendar, you need goals and objectives, and you need exercise, family time and relaxation at appropriate intervals.

- **Action**

YOU must make your search end successfully with a new position. Assume that people will not get back to you, will forget you are seeking a new position, will cancel meetings, and will procrastinate in following through on a promised action. Just like when you were working in your last job! Draw on the skills you used then to deal with these disappointments. Make follow up calls or send follow up emails. Find someone else who can do what the other person was going to do. Be gracious in rescheduling a

coffee, lunch or meeting with someone who is volunteering his personal time to meet with you, but politely press the person to reschedule.

Do not confuse being busy with being effective. You can spend all day on the computer reading job posting websites. But are good positions in your field likely to be posted on these job sites? How many times should you revise your resume because someone has commented that they would do it differently? There comes a point when you use the resume you have and focus on higher value added actions, such as networking. Do not let unnecessary actions fill the extra time you think you have while you are not working full time. The most important actions you take are those that involve face-to-face meetings with other people because people hire people; computers do not hire people. A computer is a necessary tool for your search, but networking with other people is your top priority.

A job search is about action, not procrastination. Human nature is that our tasks often take longer the more time we have to accomplish them. This is even truer when some of those duties make us embarrassed or uncomfortable, such as calling someone we do not know or asking someone for help. You certainly can put off unpleasant tasks, but you are only slowing your own search. Remember that inaction is a decision with consequences.

EMOTIONS OF JOB HUNTING

- **Grieve for your lost job**

You are normal if you grieve for your lost job. You miss your co-workers, you miss your work, you miss the status that came with your position and you miss the compensation, benefits and perquisites of your job. These are important aspects of your life and their loss naturally stirs grief in you.

Just as when you lose a relative or close friend to death, you need to go through the stages of the grieving process before you can move forward with your job search in a positive way. These steps are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. (See Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, 1969.)

Get all of your anger towards your former boss and company out; find good friends to whom you can vent. Recognize that your behaviors are the stages of grieving and be aware of the need to move through each stage. Do not get hung up in one stage; you need to be able to move to acceptance to conduct a successful job search. Do not vent to colleagues or industry peers; sour grapes are not valued and your comments may signal a prospective employer that you are a bitter person, someone they do not want in their organization.

- **Confront the reasons why you are looking for a new job**

You need to assess why you are out of a job. If your company failed or was bought and your office or plant closed, your answer is easy. If there was a reduction in force and all similarly situated employees were let go, your answer also is easy. But if you alone were selected or only a handful of people were let go, you need to analyze what made you vulnerable – poor performance review in the last cycle, failure to meet goals, outdated skills, compensation too high compared to newer employees, poor relationship with manager or other employees, or something else. You need to honestly and realistically identify the root cause so that you can remedy any weaknesses before setting off on your job search.

- **Be honest with yourself in a self analysis**

Before you can sell yourself to a prospective employer, you need to understand what you possess in the way of education, skills and experience. You also need to assess your personality – how are you perceived by other people? Is your outlook happy and positive or do you tend to be negative? Are you overly aggressive or too passive? Are you an initiator or do you hang back and let others take the lead? You also need to understand how to modify any negative behaviors. Then, you can market your collection of attributes to different types of prospective employers. You should not market yourself by a classification, such as accountant or brand manager. You need to explain the specifics of what you can do for a prospective employer.

When you describe your education, you should elaborate beyond the degree received and the granting educational institution. What specialized body of information and set of skills did you learn during your formal studies? Are you a creative and concise writer? Are you able to perform statistical analyses? Do you understand how to use the latest software?

During your career to date, what skills did you acquire and perfect? Do you have good interpersonal skills? Are you able to manage and motivate subordinates? Do you have special expertise in organizing large amounts of information and data so that it can be analyzed or used by your employer? And can you provide measurements or metrics that demonstrate how you successfully applied those skills to achieving your former employer's business goals?

While identifying your strengths and successes is important, you must also identify your weaknesses and failures. This will help you avoid seeking jobs where you are unlikely to be able to persuade a prospective employer that you can handle the job.

This self-analysis will help you analyze prospective positions so that you can then explain how your education, skills and expertise can be applied to accomplishing the job's parameters and the prospective employer's goals.

- **Emotions – highs and lows**

You will not need to go to an amusement park during your job search to experience the emotions of being on a roller coaster. You will have days where you are euphoric because you have identified the ideal job, had a great networking meeting, made the cut to the next round in a job search or performed perfectly during an interview. And then a few days later, your world will be ending because there are no interesting jobs, people are not returning your calls, you have had no word from a prospective employer in three weeks since you submitted your on-line application, or you get the form rejection letter.

You will have to learn to deal with rejection. In some respects, your emotions will be like those of a senior in high school on April 1st waiting to receive an acceptance letter from her college of choice. But just like the high school senior, there is a school where she will attend in the fall and get a good education whether it is her first choice or not. So, too, there is a job where you will be compensated and do meaningful work.

Rejection takes many forms and you need to be able to identify the differences so you can emotionally respond to them in the proper way. The absence of a response to an on-line application is not rejection; it is simply the result of the fact that a prospective employer will only screen 25 applicants for each position. If 200 applications are received, the majority are ignored. Prospective employers with heart and common sense build into their automated systems an automatic response acknowledging your application and telling you that only if you are to be considered for the job will you hear further from them. But many do not do this, so the absence of an acknowledgement is not a rejection.

Similarly, when remote acquaintances and indirect networking leads do not respond as quickly as you would like, you are not being rejected. They are simply pursuing activities of higher priority in their lives. It is not about you. Other people have lives, too. Your response here should be disappointment, but not a feeling of rejection. How can you feel disrespected by someone who does not really know you?

Rejection and the related emotions of depression, anger and helplessness are properly reserved for when you are told that you do not get the job for which you are one of three finalists. Just as when you lost your

prior job, you should take some time to grieve. Take off a few days from your search and do things that make you happy. Spend time with your family and close friends doing pleasurable activities, exercise, go to a movie, or read a good e-book.

Depression is a common companion for an out of work person. It is part of the grieving process, which hopefully will be overcome within a reasonable time period after the job loss, but it may reappear often during the roller coaster of the job search. You need to be aware of its symptoms, how it affects you and methods of addressing it. Sometimes you and your family can tackle the problem, but other times you need professional counseling regardless of the dollar cost. Failure to overcome depression can severely interfere with your job search success. No one wants to hire a person who is obviously depressed.

- **Pace yourself**

Unless you are exceedingly lucky, your job search will take longer than you expect. It is not uncommon for people to be out of work for at least one year between jobs, and sometimes two or more years. This has been a reason for the battle to extend unemployment compensation benefits to 99 weeks – almost two years.

In your last job, you needed weekends off and periodic vacations to give you the physical and mental strength to handle the responsibilities of your job. So, too, you need time off during a job search. You may be biased to press 24/7 in your search because of emotional, financial and other reasons. But just as you need to be physically and mentally rested to perform your best in a job, you also need to be rested for networking meetings, interviews and even telephone calls. Your facial expressions, voice tone and choice of words will be adversely affected when you are tired or depressed.

- **Family Friction**

Job loss, like other major family events, leads to family frictions. All of a sudden, you are home all day, every day. The pattern of life for your family has changed dramatically. Role reversal may occur if you were the principal breadwinner in your family. With that, you may suffer a loss of

self-esteem, and a perceived or actual loss of respect from your spouse, children, in-laws and other relatives and friends.

While you try to put on a happy face, your children will sense your new demeanor and will overhear conversations with your spouse and those with whom you are networking. Children will also miss family vacations and other luxuries; they may worry that your family will need to relocate for a new job and they will have to leave their schools and friends. They may also worry about whether they will be able to go to the college of their choice or any college at all. They may begin to doubt the value of education if they see you losing your job despite your education level. They may be embarrassed around their friends because of your job loss.

Like other aspects of your job loss and search, you need to recognize that these reactions are normal and develop techniques for coping with them.

- **Coping techniques**

Each of us has different ways of coping with stress and unpleasant life events. Some are healthy and some are not. As part of your self-assessment, you need to identify your positive and negative coping techniques and work to overcome the negative ones. For most people, interacting with others you love and enjoying being with is a fundamental coping technique. Exercise, proper eating and good health in general are important to getting you through this life phase, as they were when you were employed. Volunteer work and hobbies also help you forget about your search for brief periods and give you pleasure directly or as a result of helping others also in need of support. Further, volunteer opportunities that place you with those in your field can promote networking.

Communication is another vitally important coping technique. The more you can share with your spouse and children, the better they can understand why you lost your job and what you are doing to get another. They will understand why their love and support is needed now more than when you were working. Let them express their feelings. But be honest in your discussions; if your job loss means a reduced scale of living or a family relocation, they need to know.

FINDING YOUR NEW JOB

- **Amount of time required**

Most everything in life takes longer than you want it to. When you are out of work, this seems even more so. And you are right, it does.

First, you are more anxious because you are not used to not having a place to go every day. You are also likely to be more anxious because your job loss may be putting a financial strain on your family or you fear losing health insurance and other benefits.

A job search takes more time than you would like because your job search is the top priority in your life, but a lesser priority to the Human Resources personnel and hiring managers on whom your successful search depends. For reasons that are hard to explain, companies generally take longer to fill a job vacancy than they and you expect. While most good managers believe that their most important job is hiring talented people, the steps in completing the hire often take a low priority in their daily business activities. Business travel in particular wreaks havoc with the hiring process because key people in the decision-making process are out of the office when a job description needs to be written or approved, the first screen of candidates needs to be discussed or a candidate needs to be interviewed.

Your search is a top priority to you, but is a lesser priority to your networking contacts. Remember that you are asking them to give up some of their limited time in order to meet with you and help you with your search. They are doing you a favor, so it is ungrateful to pressure them to meet or undertake the promised follow up. Since our economy has been in crisis for almost five years, many otherwise supportive networking contacts are frankly burned out with helping others in their job searches while they are looking over their shoulders fearing their own job loss.

One rule of thumb is that for each \$10,000 of income you were making, it will take one month of search to find your new position. Regardless of the guesstimates, the fact is that long-term unemployment is becoming common in the modern economy, so you should be prepared for your search to take much longer than you would like.

Given this time line, you need to structure your search in certain ways to help minimize the search time. First, take time to grieve your lost position and make a realistic self-assessment of what you want to do in your next position. Second, prioritize those actions that will form the foundation of your search, such as preparing lists of people with whom you can network and lists of prospective employers. Third, pace yourself. Take time to be thorough in your actions. Contact first those networking contacts more likely to lead to a position (former colleagues, people with similar jobs at customers or suppliers), then more casual acquaintances (neighbors, club members, parents of your child's friends). Schedule mileposts at least every quarter, perhaps every month, at which point you reassess your goals, recontact networking connections, assess what is happening in your career field, rethink your marketing materials and assess the effectiveness of your strategies and actions. See Appendix 1 for a suggested job search time line.

- **Organizing your search**

You need to develop an organization for your search information and a structure for using your time. The key elements of your organization are as follows:

- Create an office. If you are offered outplacement services with an office, use it. If not, find a place at home or in an empty office at a friend's business, where you can have a private, quiet place to conduct your calls, computer research and planning. Go to your office with the same frequency that you went to work for your last position.
- Be efficient. There needs to be a method to your search. There is no one perfect system; just find one that works for you that is simple to maintain.
- Use a contact manager and calendar: You need a contact manager and calendar to keep track of people and appointments and your cell phone contact software is probably sufficient; certainly Outlook works. Understand what information you need to organize:
 1. Personal contact information – name, email, telephone number, industry, referral person, last time you met or spoke, personal details so you can show interest in the person the next time you meet.

2. Prospective employers – name, industry, types of jobs, people you know there or people who know people who work there.

3. Calendar – keep with you (on your Blackberry, iPhone, in a notebook) so you can immediately schedule meetings whenever you are contacted or have a conversation.

4. Keep your contacts' information up to date by spending time on this effort every day. If you join a business networking site like LinkedIn, other people will assemble and maintain a lot of this information for you as they keep their own information current!

- Create structure to your days and weeks. Just as when you were working at your last job, there were certain actions, reports, meetings, sales calls and performance reviews that had to occur at regular intervals to accomplish your business goals. So, too, with your search. You need to have regular times for actions, such as making calls, scheduling networking meetings, scanning websites, and researching prospective employers. But you will need to be flexible in the job search period because you are more dependent on other peoples' schedules.

- Develop job search habits. A job search is a full time job; repeat after me: a job search is a full time job. And you need to develop regular job search habits.

1. Keep regular hours – get dressed every day because appearance affects attitude. Keep active. If you do not have a regular exercise schedule, use this opportunity to create one. Exercise with friends or a group. Exercise reduces stress. Walking is free.

2. Obtain and use basic tools – computer, cell telephone and marketing materials.

3. Always have your antennae up, listening for possible networking opportunities – while shopping, exercising, or attending your child’s sports or school events – every person is a potential link to a future job. It is no longer embarrassing to be out of work. Everyone you know knows someone who has been through this. If your daily contacts do not know you are looking, they will not be able to share leads.

4. Prepare and follow to do lists – daily, weekly, monthly. At the end of each day’s job search activities, make a list of what you are going to do tomorrow whether on paper, your computer or your cell phone or other electronic device.

STRATEGIES

- **Parallel paths**

Many job seekers take a linear approach to their search. They pursue one lead until it proves to be a dead end. Then, they start another. This technique can work, but your search will take longer than it needs to and you will suffer more severe emotional down drafts when you hit a dead end.

The strategy of parallel paths has two components. First, you should identify at least two career paths, e.g., full time job in the same field as your prior job and establishing your own consulting business. Second, within each path, you need to pursue multiple jobs or clients simultaneously so that if one search reaches a dead end – and you are disappointed – you can console yourself with the fact that other opportunities are still in play.

The two or more career path strategy is necessary in this economy for a variety of reasons. If you are an older job seeker, you must be realistic that you may never be considered again for a full time job in your prior field, so you have to consider setting up a consulting business or seeking a series of contract assignments. Second, while you may have had acceptable skills in your prior firm, similar firms may demand more current skills or simply utilize different, sophisticated software programs that you do not know. Some firms have changed their business models to become virtual employers, hiring contractors on a project-by-project basis. Or your industry may be one that is shrinking and you need to assess how you can make your core skills transferable to a different industry.

The multiple prospective employer strategy is pretty self-evident. When every job has a large number of applicants, you cannot hope that you will be the needle picked from the haystack of applications and hired for a particular job. The more applications you have pending, the higher the odds that one will lead to a job.

- **Inside Advocate**

Because of the large number of applications for each job vacancy and most employers' use of automated application processing systems, you need a person inside the targeted employer organization to help you get noticed. The automated application processing systems help the employer deal with

the volume of applications and comply with non-discrimination laws. But someone has to make the decision on which of the many applicants gets further consideration. Your Inside Advocate is someone who can influence the person(s) making that first round selection among all the applicants.

Ideally, the Inside Advocate knows you well. Perhaps such person is a former colleague, relative, neighbor, parent of one of your child's friends, or a member of a community or religious institution to which you belong. But it does not have to be a person with whom you have a relationship. Your Inside Advocate can be a fellow alumnus of your college, someone who grew up in the same hometown or a person whose Profile you find on LinkedIn.

Once you identify your Inside Advocate you want this person to do at least one thing: take another copy of your cover letter, resume and application to the hiring manager for the job for which you are applying and ask that person to review it. The more closely you know your Inside Advocate, the more likely such person will be willing to do more and actually ask the hiring manager to interview you.

Sometimes you have to settle for the Inside Advocate giving your materials to the HR Manager handling the search. Remember that the Inside Advocate (and networking contacts as discussed below) are putting their reputation on the line and using their "organizational capital" on your behalf so you want to present as strong a case as possible for why they should help you and why you are a very strong candidate for the open position.

Your Inside Advocate also has another role. This is a person who can help you with your due diligence about the vacancy and the company. After you have done your thorough Internet search about the company and, perhaps even the hiring manager, you need additional information. Perhaps your Inside Advocate will be willing to tell you the real reason there is a vacancy or the reputation of the hiring manager or the challenges facing the company at this time.

The Inside Advocate can also be a source of information about jobs that are not yet posted. In fact, many vacancies are filled without a posting until the desired candidate has been located; then, the company goes through the motions of posting the job and accepting applications just to appear to comply with company policies and legal non-discrimination requirements.

- **Thought leader**

When you become a recognized authority in your field or successful in your career, people at other companies become aware of you. During your job search, you will get a better reception because of your reputation or other companies may actually seek you out when they have a vacancy, both while you are still employed and when you are in the market for a new position.

You cannot become a thought leader overnight. But you may already possess the knowledge that can make you a thought leader and you now need to find ways in which to share your expertise with the market. Discussion groups on LinkedIn or other social media sites provide such an opportunity, as do responses to blogs directly related to your field. You can even create your own on-line newsletter or briefing report that you send to key managers in your industry on a periodic basis.

- **Let a job find you**

Success in a job search is often the result of serendipity: that unexplained, surprise connection. The wider you extend your search, and the more things you do as part of your search, the more you create the opportunity for lightning to strike in the form of a desired job offer. Among the ways you can create the right environment are becoming a thought leader as described above, engaging in volunteer work, providing a recruiter with the names of potential candidates for other searches, networking outside your circle of acquaintances, taking classes, and accepting contract or temporary positions.

- **Consulting**

Consulting is often the default position between jobs. If you approach it with that mindset, you are likely to find it disappointing. Your efforts may not meet with success because your prospective clients will suspect that you may not finish your project if a full time job opportunity appears. You are also unlikely to invest in the foundation tasks of building a viable business, such as establishing processes, identifying resources, creating a website and investing in the equipment or materials that will enable you to properly serve your clients.

But in this economy, there are many companies that need people with your skills, just not on a full-time basis. Many employers are reluctant to commit to full time employment for other than key staff because of the fixed costs. Small businesses cannot justify the full time employment of people with certain specialized expertise and prefer to purchase that expertise on a project basis. Large established consulting, law, accounting, public relations, advertising and other service firms charge very high fees; since you do not have their overhead, your fees can be more reasonable. As a result, there is considerable demand for people with your skills and expertise who are willing to help a company on a contract, project or consulting basis.

Many job seekers who have held traditional full time positions in their career are uncomfortable with consulting because they do not want to have to sell themselves. But that is an excuse because a job search is about selling yourself. One of the reasons you held your prior position for the length of time you did was because you were continually selling yourself to your management by achieving company goals. As the proprietor of your own consulting business, you need to identify your products or services, identify prospective clients, network to introduce yourself to them, and then demonstrate how you can help them achieve their business goals – the same steps you need to take to find a traditional job.

- **Part-time, interim, temporary and contract positions**

What better way to sell your skills and demonstrate what you can do for an employer than taking a part-time, interim, temporary or contract position with the prospective employer. Not only does the employer get to see you, but also you get to perform your due diligence from the inside of the organization. Is this really a company or manager for whom I want to work?

You can obtain these positions directly or, more often today, through specialized staffing organizations that focus on your field or industry. Even if your first assignment does not lead to a permanent position, an assignment properly handled will get the attention of the staffing firm which will be more likely to send you to additional employers, increasing your exposure in the market.

- **Help recruiters so they will want to help you**

External and internal recruiters can be very helpful in your search. They often know about positions that are not listed on job boards or company websites. You need to cultivate a large number of recruiters so that they bring you many opportunities. One way to do this is to give recruiters the names of people you know who are also looking for jobs, even those in your same field. Human nature is that generally people help those who help them. If you help a recruiter with a search by providing the names of candidates, then hopefully the recruiter will remember you when an assignment involves your field. Be aware that some recruiters will only want to access your network and are not in a position to help you. Research them before agreeing to share your network.

- **Read the Obituaries**

Not the real ones. Read your business news to see where major management changes have occurred in the past year. Inevitably, when a C-Level executive leaves a company, vacancies open within the next year as the successor removes the predecessor's team and installs his or her own team. This creates openings throughout the organization all the way down the line, one of which may be just perfect for you.

- **Volunteer activities**

Volunteering at a community organization provides three key benefits during your job search. First, you are helping people who need help and, even during your time of your unemployment, are likely to be more needy than you. Second, you will feel better about yourself because you are helping others. When you have a positive personal sense about yourself, you will be happier and come across to others – such as prospective employers – as a better person with whom they would like to associate. Finally, if you carefully pick the charity to assist, you may enlarge your network by including people who can help you with your job search. Charitable, political and community organizations fill their boards with successful people who are outgoing and have large personal networks of friends, colleagues and other volunteers. As you build relationships with your fellow volunteers, there will develop a discrete moment when it is appropriate for you ask for help in your job search.

UNDERSTANDING HR

You cannot live with them and you cannot live without them – HR managers. Everyone complains about the Human Resources Departments of prospective employers. Some criticism is justified and some is not when you understand their role in the hiring process. And when you understand the role, you can often employ strategies to use or finesse HR.

- **Basics of the hiring process**

1. Position Requisition: In many companies, a job description cannot be prepared until the proposed position is approved. Often, the Chief Financial Officer or someone in the finance function must confirm that the position has been budgeted.

2. Job Description: In most companies, after the Job Requisition has been approved, a job search starts with the preparation of a job description by the hiring manager. This job description sets out the educational, skills and experiential requirements of, the scope of responsibility related to, and the specific tasks or duties for the job. Often times, the job description is a hiring manager's wish list in which he or she seeks a candidate who truly walks on water. And often times, the hiring manager does not take the time to analyze what is really needed for the replacement or in a newly created position and just takes the prior employee's job description and makes minor changes.

3. Rating the Position: Once a job description has been prepared, the HR compensation and benefits group will evaluate the job using the Hay or other valuation system to enable the placement of the job within the salary and benefits structure of the company. A grade and related salary range will then be assigned to the position.

4. The Search: Only after the above steps have been completed may the HR recruiting manager begin the search. Many companies have a policy that the position must first be posted internally for a short period of time before the search may go outside the company.

Once the search goes outside the company, it usually involves posting the vacancy on a company website. It may also involve retaining a recruiter if the position is at a senior level or requires specialized expertise, or it may involve advertising through Internet websites or even old fashion newspaper classifieds. In some cases, the HR recruiting manager may go into LinkedIn to scan its database for possible candidates.

5. Screening Applicants: After a period of time, the HR recruiting manager will begin to screen applicants. The automated application software often has the ability to screen out candidates who do not meet the basic requirements of the position. But the number of applications that pass this step may still be excessive. At some point, the HR recruiting manager, or sometimes the hiring manager or a delegate, will actually read the applications, cover letters and resumes. The goal of this step is to identify those applicants who merit a further screening.

Unfortunately, entry-level HR employees often perform this step. This may mean that they do not understand their employer's business very well and they likely do not understand the job for which you are applying. They also may not appreciate the quality of your education or work experience; they do not realize that a degree from a large state university is better than an associate degree from a junior college or a degree from a correspondence/on-line school. They do not appreciate that ten years of experience with General Electric is more valuable than ten years with a local fabricating company. As a result, they are unlikely to understand why your credentials make you a better candidate compared to other applicants. This is another reason why your resume needs to be customized for each position for which it is submitted to closely align your resume with the job description and why you need an Inside Advocate to get your cover letter and resume to the hiring manager.

Today, the second screening usually involves a telephone interview during which the HR recruiting manager has a checklist of questions. After these interviews, the HR recruiting manager will select a number of applicants for personal interviews.

6. Interviews: A company usually conducts a series of interviews of the double-screened applicants. Often, a first round of interviews will be with the HR recruiting manager and a subordinate of the hiring manager. Subsequent interviews may involve managers from other departments or work groups and, of course, the hiring manager. In some companies, the hiring manager must submit his or her top one or two choices for a further interview by his or her supervisor, department head, division head or even the company's CEO. You must be well prepared for each interview as described below.

7. Relationship between HR recruiting manager and the hiring manager: These two managers need each other. The hiring manager ultimately decides which person to hire, but that is subject to company HR policies and procedures. Ideally, you want to have your dialogue and other communications with the hiring manager so that you can begin to develop a relationship with the person for whom you will be working directly or indirectly and continually demonstrate how you are going to help this person achieve his or her goals. Hopefully, the HR recruiting manager fills a supporting role and takes direction from the hiring manager. But if this is not the case and the HR recruiting manager has a great deal of authority in the hiring process, then you need to cultivate this person carefully. Your cultivation needs to include polite questioning about company policies and procedures with which you must comply.

- **Hiring Process Time Line**

With so many steps and people involved, job searches almost always take longer than planned. Common sense would suggest that one way a hiring manager can lessen his or her burdens is to fill vacant positions as quickly as possible. Yet, the reality is that completing the steps in the process is often given a low priority in the day's list of action items. Travel schedules also wreak havoc with the time line. As a job seeker, you must develop patience. Just because you do not hear from a prospective employer by the date you were told does not mean you are out of consideration; it probably means the process was delayed.

- **Working with HR**

Now that you know the process, there are actions you can take to work within the process and outside it to move your candidacy along.

1. Customize your resume to include the key words related to the position as set forth in the job posting. Also craft your resume so that you appear to fit the education, experience and skills requirements. This will help you get through the automated screen.

2. Prepare answers in advance to the expected telephone interview questions. Your Inside Advocate and independent research about the company will help you prepare acceptable answers. Learn how to evade troublesome questions, such as your past compensation or a period of unemployment as indicated by your resume.

3. Always ask when you should expect to hear from the HR recruiting manager, hiring manager, or other persons with whom you have contact.

4. Try to get the name and email address of the hiring manager. Without much difficulty, you can figure out the latter once you have an email message from anyone in the company because that other message will disclose the email address convention they use.

5. Make direct contact with the hiring manager with information about yourself that may assist him or her in evaluating your candidacy.

6. Be respectful of the HR recruiting manager even if you think the person does not understand the job or is unable to properly assess your background. If you irritate this person, he or she can easily take you out of the running.

NETWORKING

- **Power of networking**

Hiring managers are people. At the end of every search is the connection that you establish with your future boss. But the road to that hiring manager is paved with your relationships with other people. Each person in your network introduces you to other people who introduce you to other people who eventually introduce you to the person who knows about the job for which you are perfectly qualified.

A network is like dropping a pebble in a pool of water: each wavelet is another contact in your network. You need to keep tossing pebbles until the wavelet becomes a full wave sending information about you out in your career field and information about available jobs back to you.

- **How to network**

Many job seekers think the hardest part of networking is identifying and contacting strangers. But really, the hardest thing is making each networking meeting, call or event productive. You need to go into each encounter with a goal and, as a result, you need to know how to structure your conversation to get to your goal. What do you say to get it going, how do you keep it moving and when do you bring it to a close?

You should value the time of the networking contact by sticking to the time such person agreed to give you. Social chitchat about sports teams, the weather and recent news may break the ice in your conversation, but quickly move the conversation to your job search. Concisely outline what types of positions you are seeking and how your education and experience makes you a good candidate for that type of job. This is usually the time to give the other person a copy of your Handbill (explained below) because it sets the table for your next action. Then ask the most important question: do you know three people with whom I should speak and will you introduce me to them by telephone call or email message?

A networking meeting is not all about you. To the extent you have industry information that may be interesting or useful -- and it is not confidential to a former employer -- you should share that information. This

may help demonstrate your expertise to the other person and provide a reason for helping you.

Once your contact has identified the three people to whom he or she promises to introduce you and you have shared some industry information, you should bring your meeting to a conclusion by thanking the person for his or her time and the contacts. Ask when you should contact the three people he or she is going to contact on your behalf. Then do so. Respect that someone has faith in you enough to share a contact. Follow-up and show respect.

- **Reaping the benefits of networking/care and feeding of your network**

The value of your network is that it is a pipeline of continuing information. You have to give, as well as receive. When you come across an article in a print or electronic communication that might be helpful to a networking contact, send it to that person. This demonstrates your availability to help and that you understand their interests and business. Your message also reminds that person about you.

At periodic intervals, you need to send out Reminder Messages to your network. See below in Key Marketing Materials/Reminder Message. This lets your contacts know you are still searching for a position. Since change happens constantly, your reconnection may catch someone at a time when new circumstances have resulted in an opening at his company or another of which he is aware. Do not assume your contacts know you are still looking.

- **Industry Trade Groups and Professional Meetings**

The best sources of information about available positions in your field come from other people who are currently working in your field. Take advantage of industry trade group meetings and social events, professional classes and trade shows. Events held in your locality do not require you to incur travel expenses. If your membership in the organization has lapsed, perhaps a friend will invite you as a guest and help introduce you to people you do not know.

Offer to share your expertise at such a meeting in lieu of an attendance fee. You could make a presentation on a current topic or serve on a panel. The process of preparing your presentation will help you stay current in your field. You can even offer to help with the meeting logistics, such as staffing a registration desk, coordinating presenters or distributing materials during the events.

- **Creative networking**

Creative networking involves non-traditional ways of identifying people who can become part of your network. The creativity arises from taking an opportunity where lots of people you do not know will be participating together and may not know many other people, too. Or it may be an event where an organization is trying to attract new customers, members, volunteers or contributors, so everyone is more inclined to speak with people they do not know. These types of events include industry trade shows and conventions, volunteering to speak or help at community programs, competing in an athletic or sports events, or joining a charitable walk.

One of the best is attending trade shows or conventions in your industry. While admittance may require an expensive fee, you know that people who are there work in your industry and exhibitors are going to be prospective employers. When you register, you will get access to a list of prospective participants and exhibitors. You can use this list to identify the people you want to try to meet or the exhibits you want to visit in hopes of meeting key people in the company. You can even use the floor plan of exhibits to plan out your days so you use your time efficiently. At these trade shows, your goal is to introduce yourself, leave a brief impression and get a business card so that you can immediately follow up by sending a cover letter and resume. Trade show participants do not expect to have customers sign orders at the show; they are developing leads that will be pursued. Similarly, no one is going to hire you at the trade show, but you are developing leads to pursue once the show ends.

Other creative networking events are not focused on your industry so your activities must be more discrete. You will need to use your best socializing skills to meet people and introduce yourself. If appropriate, you can mention your job search and try to get a business card from each person so you can follow up after the event. If you are the speaker at an event,

participants are likely to approach you after your speech and ask for your card in which case you should ask for theirs.

- **Identify a need and explain how you can fill it**

One way to sell yourself and network into a new position is to identify a need at companies in your field. During your networking you can explain that need and how you can fill it. This often works if your previous position was with a large company with many employees and strong financial resources that permitted the company to employ specialists, purchase sophisticated software, conduct employee training, and provide sophisticated employee development programs. Small and mid-size companies do not have the people and resources to improve their businesses in this way. You can explain how you can bring that expertise to the company.

- **The power of serendipity**

You never know who can help you with your job search. Successful job seekers tell stories of standing in line at a supermarket or making a condolence call. While speaking with the next person in line or another visitor to the family of a deceased, people introduce themselves and may get around to the question, what do you do. The door is then open for you to say you are seeking a new position and discretely provide your business card and perhaps your handbill, as well. People will pick up on how you perceive your situation. If you are upbeat, it puts others at ease.

Contacts that you made months earlier in your search can result in new job leads. The pace of change in companies is infuriating and the company that had no vacancy three months ago may now have one in your field. The serendipity here arises from increasing your network and periodically reconnecting with people.

You will also find to your satisfaction that you may be selected because the hiring manager went to your same university, grew up in the same city, is a fan of the same professional sports team or some other affinity relationship that makes the hiring manager see you as a similar person. Many hiring managers like to hire people who are similar to them.

KEY MARKETING MATERIALS

The six key marketing materials for your search are described below and samples are provided. For each of these items, the keys to its usefulness are brevity and specificity. The recipients of these materials will have little time to review them so your message must be concise and direct so they will know what you can do for them (or someone they are going to introduce you to).

For each of these items, there are hundreds of theories on their composition. This guide contains one author's theory. Others' approaches are undoubtedly as good or better. But the keys are still brevity and specificity. Do not fall into the trap of trying to prepare the "perfect" document; this is often just a form of procrastination to justify not being more active in your search. Prepare your materials, try them out and keep networking.

- **Business card**

Everyone needs a business card, a physical thing you can give people you meet on which you list your (i) name, (ii) telephone number(s), (iii) email address, (iv) home or business address, and (v) LinkedIn Profile URL address. Many people also include a "brand" or identifier about what they do; this can appear under your name or, if more detail is desired, on the reverse of the card. Your brand may be "In-house Counsel," or "CPA concentrating in tax issues" or "Experienced Consumer Goods Brand Manager." You can obtain your business cards inexpensively from the large office supply stores and on-line vendors. You may want to have more than one version if your search is focusing on parallel paths that are significantly different.

See Appendix 2 for a sample of a Business Card.

- **Resume**

Your resume tells the story of who you were – where you were educated and in which discipline, which employers you have worked for and what you accomplished for them and what other achievements you have attained. Your resume implies to a prospective employer what you are able to do for that employer based on what you have done in the past.

In the author's opinion, far too much time and effort is put into resumes, particularly for experienced job seekers. While you need a well written and attractive appearing resume, do not refrain from networking, the key activity in finding a new position, while you craft the "perfect resume."

You can show your resume to 100 people and get 100 suggestions on what to change. You can also read many books and even pay thousands of dollars to resume "doctors" to prepare your resume. All that is wasted time, energy and money. Find a standard form for a resume on the Internet and assemble your personal information in that format.

In this author's opinion, the keys to an effective resume are as follows:

1. Be brief; be as concise and specific as you can about each entry.
2. Use metrics that illustrate the scope of your responsibility and the impact on the business resulting from your efforts; e.g., responsible for division with \$50 million in annual revenues for which sales and profits increased 5% and 6%, respectively, for each of the five years during which I headed the division.
3. Omit an objective because your objective is the job for which you are applying; but your objective should be stated in your handbill – see below.
4. Customize each resume to include the key words from the job description for the position for which you are applying.
5. Customize your resume to show how you can achieve the prospective employer's goals for the position; e.g., if the position is for a sales manager, include a description of techniques you implemented that drove sales for a prior employer.

6. If you wish to list accomplishments of similar types, e.g., acquisitions on which you worked as an attorney, put those in an attachment to the resume.

See Appendix 3 for a sample of a Resume.

- **Cover letter**

Your cover letter is your selling document. It is the bridge between what you have done in the past and how you can bring your education and experience to bear for the benefit of the prospective employer. A cover letter should be comprised of three parts:

1. The first paragraph states the purpose of the letter: I am applying for your vacant position of brand manager.

2. The second section, which may consist of multiple paragraphs, describes how your education and experience will enable you to achieve the desired results; e.g., “My B.A. from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania combined with my six years of increasing responsibility managing brands in the Personal Care Division of Procter & Gamble give me the skills to help you expand the offerings in your women’s cosmetics line. I am able to oversee focus groups, packaging design, production coordination and the development of media marketing materials to launch new products that are quickly accepted by the consumer. While at P&G, I was the brand manager on the launch of the XYZ line of eyeliners that achieved \$50 million in sales in the first year and 10% increases in each of the next three years.”

3. The last paragraph asks for the opportunity for a personal meeting to discuss how you can help the prospective employer achieve its goals.

See Appendix 4 for a sample Cover Letter.

- **Handbill**

A handbill allows you to answer the question that most warm-hearted people ask when they learn you are seeking a new job: what can I do to help you? You respond by giving them a copy of your handbill that can be a

single 8.5” x 11” piece of paper, or as simple as a 4” x 6” card. (The author’s personal preference is for the card because it is easier to put in a pocket or purse and keep handy.)

The contents of your handbill should be as follows:

1. Summary of your expertise: Skilled financial analyst with a C.P.A. and M.B.A. who has previously worked in commercial banking, investment banking and REIT enterprises.
2. Your career objective: Seeking financial management position in financial services company.
3. Listing of your education.
4. Summary of positions during the past ten years (unless prior years provide a skill set or accomplishments that are important).
5. Ten prospective employers for whom you think you would like to work and to which you need an introduction. This is the part that tells the person to whom you are talking how he or she can provide help. If they know someone at the targeted companies, you then ask them to make an introduction for you. This is how you find an Inside Advocate.

See Appendix 5 for a sample of a Handbill.

- **30 Second Summary a/k/a the “Elevator Speech”**

The 30-second summary is how you market yourself, conversationally, to every person you meet who may be able to help you find a new position. Remember that question from the introduction: what do you do? That is an invitation to give your 30-second summary. The person standing in front of you in a grocery store check out line when the person in front of him has 50 items in the ten item or less line: that is an invitation to strike up a conversation and give your 30-second summary. While you are at a child’s sporting or school event, at social functions after a community or religious event, bump into a school friend or neighbor – these are all opportunities to give your 30-second summary.

The name “Elevator Speech” is derived from the fiction that you get on the elevator with someone who can hire you and you only have the length of time to sell yourself that it takes the elevator to take you or she to the first person’s stop. When the door opens, the other person should know who you are, your skills and experience and how you can help that person’s organization.

Your Elevator Speech should be concise and refined and you should practice it so that you are as comfortable delivering it as you are telling someone your name. You should strive for a conversational tone that is relaxed, rather than a formal, rapid recitation because, in truth, you are unlikely to be delivering it under the time pressure of a captive elevator ride.

You also need to develop the techniques for how to be able to give your elevator speech. You do not necessarily leap into it when you are first introduced or bump into someone, but you need to develop the finesse to present it before you separate from that person. For example, you meet a friend or neighbor you have not seen since your job loss. When they ask how you are, you respond that you are fine, but that you recently lost your job and then give your Elevator Speech.

At first, there will be discomfort in presenting your Elevator Speech and you may present it stiffly. One source of embarrassment may be the fact of job loss itself. Get over it. In this era, every person you meet has either lost a job or could tomorrow. But for the grace of G-d, the person to whom you are speaking could be in your shoes in a short period of time.

Most people want to help someone who is out of work find a job, but they do not know how to help. Your Elevator Speech is one way you can tell them how they can help. You are telling them what you want to do, why you can help an employer and what types of companies and positions you are seeking.

See Appendix 6 for a sample of a 30-Second Summary.

- **LinkedIn profile**

Your LinkedIn Profile (see below RESOURCES: Social Media, LinkedIn) is one of your most important tools. You can advertise yourself even when you are still working because the site is recognized as a way that

professionals and business managers market themselves and make connections for their employers, as well as themselves.

See Appendix 7 for a sample of a LinkedIn Profile.

- **Thank you note**

Sometimes, old techniques work. In this era of electronic communications by the hundreds every day, a handwritten thank you note sent by snail mail gets attention. It demonstrates your good manners and that you take very seriously the impression you are trying to make after an interview or even just a networking meeting.

An electronic follow up message is essential whether you send the handwritten thank you note or not. Your message should be short, perhaps only three sentences: (i) thank you for taking the time to meet with me **TODAY** to discuss your vacancy for a _____; (ii) My education and experience will permit me to immediately begin providing value to your company by _____; and (iii) I am very interested in the position and would enjoy being a member of your team. You have to ask for the job, as every good salesperson knows.

See Appendix 8 for a sample of a Thank You Note.

- **Reconnection Email Message**

Out of sight, out of mind. As your job search progresses, time will pass and people you have contacted previously may not be aware you are still looking for a new position. Three months is a long time in the business world today; many changes can occur at your target companies in that interval and positions can appear that were not available a short time ago. Therefore, you should send a message to your network at periodic intervals. Often, you can send a holiday greeting or birthday best wishes and include a brief note on your status.

A good reminder message contains the following points:

1. Best wishes for happy holidays/happy birthday/etc. greeting
2. Ask if there is anything you can do to help your contact.

3. Briefly state that you are still searching for a position as [state your career objective]
4. Ask them to suggest people with whom you should speak
5. Thank them for their past help in your search.

See Appendix 9 for a sample of a Reminder Message.

INTERVIEWING

- **Types of Interviews**

To most people, the word “interview” means a meeting in which you discuss your candidacy for a particular job with one or more people from a prospective employer. But equally important are informational interviews. These are meetings with people in your field who may be sources of information about developments in your field, companies that operate in that field, prospective jobs at one or more of those companies, and other people you meet during your networking. The comments below apply to both job-specific and informational interviews.

- **Preparing for the Interview – research**

In this Internet age there is no excuse for not doing extensive research about the prospective employer, both the company and the people with whom you will be working. Such research can help you develop meaningful questions about the industry and the company. You want to focus your questions on the company and then demonstrate how your education and experience can be applied to achieving the company’s goals. The last thing you want to do is have all your questions centered on the compensation and benefits of the position because that says you only care about yourself, not the company that may hire you.

- **Preparing for the Interview – dress and demeanor**

The easiest way to determine how to dress is to call the receptionist at the company. Ask this person about the dress code and what people who are interviewing wear. Generally, you cannot go wrong if you dress in simple business attire – nothing flashy, just basics. The exception to this rule is with high technology companies where formal business attire may send a signal that you are a stuffed shirt, elitist and not a team worker, or simply someone who does not understand the culture of companies in such an industry.

Your demeanor should always be deferential, but not weak. Start with a firm handshake. Do not be tentative in your answers, but also do not be dogmatic or overly aggressive. Listen. Do not interrupt your interviewer. Listen. Make your responses relate to the questions or statement. But like a

good politician, know your three basic message points and weave them into your answers time and time again.

- **Common questions and how to respond**

There are many lists of interview questions and suggested answers. Here are a few questions that job seekers often find problematic and one view on how to answer them. Seek guidance from other people on their suggested responses to these questions so that you can build your own response.

- **Why are you out of work?** This used to be a very sensitive question. At a time of virtually full employment, people who were out of work were perceived as having some negative back-story. In the modern economy, great employees are out of work due to no fault of their own. Businesses fail or lose volume, companies are sold to a competitor or private equity firm and rationalization (i.e., reductions in force “RIF”) follows.

But you do need a simple, positive answer. My company was experiencing financial difficulties and engaged in a RIF. Its competitor bought my company and redundancies were eliminated. My company closed its Chicago office or plant. You get the idea. Keep your explanation short and positive with no defamatory comments about poor management or the owners walking away with millions while the employees got nothing. After answering, shift to a new subject. For example, you could say: “This is why I am especially happy about the position at XYZ Company.”

- **Will you be dissatisfied with a lesser title/lower salary?**

There is a common misconception that each new job must be at a higher salary level than the most recent one. Also, people think that a lower position will be degrading and that you will be constantly looking for a new job.

One response is to explain that you are aware that salaries, like housing prices, have been reset in this troubled economy. Another response is that salary is only one component of an employment package; you are also looking at the benefits, length of commute, work environment, and professional challenge related to the position.

A third response is that you believe you have a long term future with this employer, unlike your previous one and that it is worth taking a lower salary. You can also remind the prospective employer that you cannot spend a fancy title at the local supermarket.

- **How would you feel working for someone 20 years younger?** Your response is that my supervisor and I are likely to be different in many respects, not just age. As long as we have mutual respect for each other, I will have no problem working for someone who is younger.

- **What was your prior salary?/How much to you expect to earn?** This is one of the trickiest questions to answer. Hopefully, the job posting sets out a compensation range. Your Inside Advocate should also be able to give you insight about the company's pay philosophy and practices. You can also do Internet research to find surveys of compensation for similar positions in the prospective employer's industry. Remember, the compensation is about what you are worth to the prospective employer, not about what you used to make or what you need to earn to maintain your lifestyle.

There are several answers you can use to finesse the question. First, you can say that you expect to be fairly compensated based on your education and experience. Second, you can indicate that you prefer to defer this subject until you and the company are further down the road in determining how you will help the company. Third, you can provide a range, indicating that in the past five years your compensation ranged between \$X and \$Y depending on company financial performance and your attainment of personal annual goals.

By the way, some electronic applications require you to insert an absolute number. In that case, select a number mid-way between your absolute minimum amount for which you would work and the highest amount you earned in a last job.

- **How have you used your time while between jobs?** The longer you are out of work, the more likely you need to demonstrate that you have kept your skills and information about your field current; you also need to explain how you have used your time other than in relaxation. If you have volunteered, worked at part-time jobs,

taken classes, helped other people or engaged in a self-study program, these actions show the prospective employer that you are still familiar with your industry and the larger economy and that you are a focused and industrious person. Explain how these activities have helped you keep your work skills sharp.

HANDLING THE OFFER AND THE NEW JOB

- **Know your prospective boss and company**

As a result of your research about the company and informal inquiries about your prospective boss, you should have an idea about how the company responds to prospective employees who want to negotiate the terms of their new position.

Generally, the more senior the position and the more extensive your background, the more you can negotiate. But if your position is an entry level one for which the company is hiring many people, it is unlikely you will be able to negotiate very much because the employer needs to treat all similarly situated people in the same manner to avoid charges of discrimination and unhappy employees when word gets around that some people got a better offer than others.

Some companies have policies on what can be changed in an offer. For example, some will not vary their vacation policy – all new hires get two weeks the first year, regardless of how much vacation time the person received at a prior job. This does not make sense because vacation is just an alternative form of salary, but in this economy, companies are able to make this demand.

Certain bosses show flexibility and others do not. An attempt to negotiate your offer might be a signal to the boss that you may be a demanding employee, so you would be starting off on a bad foot with your supervisor. Others defer terms of the offer to the Human Resources Department and do not care what you end up with unless it adversely affects the supervisor's budget.

- **How to counter**

The demeanor you adopt, the words you choose and the professionalism you show in your negotiations will affect the outcome. First, if you do not ask, you will not get. Most employers expect some push back from prospective employees. Second, focus on the most important issues, but you may want to include some second priority items that you can give up to show your flexibility. For example, you might want a higher

starting salary and an extra week of vacation; but you can give up the vacation, if the prospective employer agrees to the higher salary.

Demeanor and word choice convey an important message about how you will be perceived. Instead of saying that you must have an additional \$X thousand base salary, you can ask if there is any room for an upward adjustment in base salary in light of your experience and your understanding that other companies pay such amount for similar positions. This shows politeness, does not put the prospective supervisor in a corner and indicates you have done your homework.

Timing your response to an offer can also increase your leverage. If you know the company is anxious to complete its search and fill a position, and you delay your response a day or two, you might be perceived as considering another offer. When you finally respond with a request for an improved salary or other terms of employment, the prospective employer may be more receptive to the request.

Remember, too, that an immediate acceptance may indicate desperation and convey a lack of alternatives or an impetuous personality. Your future supervisor subconsciously may realize that he or she can more easily limit your raises and other perquisites. Your bargaining power is never as great as the moment before you accept an offer.

- **Be happy, be cautious**

You should be happy about your offer. Undoubtedly, it does not include everything you might want. But it is a statement that you are valuable to an employer. Particularly, in this unsettled economic environment, it makes you more attractive to other prospective employers because you are working. You also have an opportunity to increase your network among new colleagues, suppliers and customers. In addition, you can add to your personal skill set. Remember, you can't spend a fancy office or big title at the grocery store, so focus on the aspects of the offer that make the most importance to your present needs AND your future growth and job prospects.

But be cautious. Do not demonstrate behaviors you may have demonstrated after ten years at a prior job. Hang back a bit. Do not join in grousing about your new employer, work assignments and particular

colleagues. Be a careful observer of the unofficial policies of your new workplace so that you know what is really acceptable and what is not.

Keep an ear to the ground about your company and its industry. You need to know if a major account is lost, the industry is facing cutbacks or the financial standing of your new employer has weakened. Then, you need to realistically assess how this might affect you because often last hired is first fired in a downsizing.

- **After you start work, keep networking**

Never stop networking. In this era of uncertain economic times, you never know when you may need to look for another position. Keep up your contact database with information about your new colleagues, suppliers and customers. Make a point of going to industry trade shows, continuing education and other professional meetings. Help friends and acquaintances who are in the job market so that they will feel an obligation to help you if the need arises. You should network every day just as you breathe every day.

DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES

- **Over 50 job seeker**

Older job seekers must be realistic that they may never be considered for a full time job in their prior field; certainly this is illegal age discrimination, but clever employers can conduct their searches in ways that do not establish a violation of the law. Older job seekers may be passed over because age is often equated with higher compensation, unwillingness to change, inability to learn or simply because the twenty-something HR assistant does not want someone like Mom or Dad working down the hall.

Older job seekers must be realistic that they may obtain a new full time position, but at a lower compensation, lesser title, with less responsibility and few or no subordinates. The whole work experience may be different and feel like a return to earlier in your career. But if your goal is to be working, then it is not about you. Your efforts must be focused on delivering value to your new employer by deploying your education and expertise for its benefit.

During your search, learn to turn your age into a positive, distinctive difference. Any new employee for the position is going to have a learning curve, but an experienced employee like you will have a shorter learning curve in a new company because you may have changed jobs before or your years of work experience have familiarized you with the processes and structures in organizations. You can emphasize your work ethic and attendance history. You should emphasize that you have judgment derived from encountering and solving similar problems in the past.

- **Recent graduate**

If you are a recent graduate, you have significant advantages, but also disadvantages, depending on your desired field. Most large organizations have a large variety of entry-level positions, even during times of economic duress. These organizations are looking for new employees, at relatively low compensation who they can train in the products, procedures and structure of the company. As a new graduate, you are used to learning new things and do not expect high compensation. This makes you valuable and desirable to such companies.

But in some fields, and in smaller companies, employers do not have the time to train new employees. They are also aware that new graduates often churn through several jobs in the first few years after graduation as you find the career that satisfies you; small companies cannot afford to train you only to have you leave after a year or two.

If you have no experience, even as an intern, then you will be frustrated by the reply that certain employers will not hire you due to your lack of experience. You may be thinking, how will you get experience if you cannot get an entry-level job – a Catch 22 situation. These fields include advertising, journalism, sports marketing and similar “glamour” industries with large numbers of applicants, and relatively few openings each year.

In contrast, law, accounting and consulting firms, commercial and investment banks, and large manufacturers have annual entry-level hiring needs. If you have earned a degree in the appropriate professional or business field, you will be a viable candidate for such positions. Many of these fields also have an established job placement process administered through the educational institutions’ career centers and with cooperation from prospective employers. Take advantage of your college or graduate school’s job placement or career center.

- **Issues Related to Women**

Women face some different issues than men. Most of these issues relate to their own job searches, but others relate to their roles as spouses of unemployed men.

The disparity in compensation between men and women performing the same job does not disappear as a result of a job search. In fact, some employers take advantage of the situation and intentionally offer less than the amount offered to a male applicant. Of course, this is not fair and you can raise the issue. But if you are dependent on the income, it is perhaps best not to raise the issue at the time you are being considered for a new position.

Men and women over 50 both suffer from age discrimination. Anecdotal evidence suggests that women may suffer more because of

societal biases about appearance. The best advice to all job seekers is to present oneself tastefully dressed and well groomed.

Women who have been out of the work force to raise children face particular challenges. The longer the interlude and the faster paced the industry in which the woman works, the more the employer may assume that the applicant's skills are not current. We all know that managing a household of growing children requires many of the same skills as required in the work place. Also, school related and other non-paid activities give a woman an opportunity to apply her interpersonal and organizational skills. These are appropriate to mention and relate to the job requirements.

The other issue many women face is when a male spouse is unemployed. This situation can be particularly challenging if the wife is employed in a well paying and professionally satisfying position. The wife's employment can exacerbate the unemployed husband's feelings of inferiority, lack of purpose and depression, particularly in those age groups in our society where the prevailing attitude is that the husband is the family breadwinner. The wife, therefore, has an extra challenge in helping her husband maintain a positive attitude.

RESOURCES

Electronic devices and the Internet have been huge positive game changers for the job search process. As a result, job seekers need to take full advantage of these powerful tools. But at the same time, job seekers need to recognize that landing a new position results from good human-to-human interaction. Your interpersonal skills must be kept polished and improved to help you obtain your next position.

- **Social media**

Internet-based social media provide a limitless source of contacts and information to help you in your job search. These sites help you connect with people from past periods in your life who may be able to help you identify and connect with possible new jobs. Employers are using these sites first to identify possible candidates for their vacancies and second to conduct reference checks of sorts on those candidates. As a result, you need to understand the various sites and use them appropriately. A few general comments about each are set forth below. You are encouraged to seek out on-line sites, local classes and knowledgeable friends who can help you maximize the benefits of using these sites.

But we need to start with some general words of caution. All electronic communications live forever. Use discretion in what you post. In prior times, people were advised to write a letter with all their venting, put it in their desk drawer and then, after the immediate emotions cooled, reread it a day or two later before sending. In this era of electronic communications, we tend to write and hit send. Later, we may regret our actions. You can save your draft of an electronic communication and reread it a day or two later. Do so. Also, ask yourself if this is so important that you really need to send it, or will you regret it a year or five in the future.

If you use Facebook or Twitter or post to a blog comments about former employers, companies or supervisors, these can come back to haunt you. Just as a catty comment can come back to embarrass you, you never know to whom your electronic message might be forwarded. Someone in that universe may have a connection to your former employer company or supervisor. Also, prospective employers may think that if this is how you address prior employers, what might you say about the prospective employer if you are hired by it?

- **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is fast becoming the premier business social media site. There is no need to pay for premium services. If you fully use the capabilities of the Profile, Skills, Groups, Discussion Groups, and search functions, you can maximize its value. There are pros and cons about attaching your resume. The pros are that prospective employers can see it when they identify you as a potential candidate for a vacancy. The con is that you must post a generic version that may not be customized for particular positions in which you are interested. The same pros and cons apply to what you put in your Profile.

Employers have recognized that LinkedIn is a more efficient way to source candidates for vacancies. Even if they pay for an employer's membership, such fees are far less than executive recruiter fees. Use of LinkedIn as a database for candidates also allows their in-house Human Resource Managers to be more efficient; rather than screening hundreds of electronically submitted resumes, they can seek out people who meet the requirements of the job description. Not only does this save them time, it probably reduces the period of time from job vacancy posting to hiring a new employee.

LinkedIn also has tools that allow you to join affinity groups than can be networking leads. You can search the community to find your Inside Advocate at a company in which you are interested. You can post accomplishments or activities in which prospective employers might be interested. You can also participate in Discussions in which you can demonstrate your expertise in your field and offer help to others, activities that attract the attention of prospective employers.

When you score an interview, you can go on LinkedIn to obtain information about the people with whom you will interview and other people in the company from whom you might obtain pre-interview information that will better prepare you for the interview.

- **Facebook**

Facebook is the largest network of people in the world, claiming over 1 billion users. Many of these people are networking contacts and even prospective employers. Many companies have pages on Facebook in order to reach their customers and employees.

Facebook initially was intended to help people build communities of personal relationships. This affects the type of materials that are presented in personal pages and posted to those sites and the sites of “friends.” Unfortunately, there was also a perception of privacy to Facebook that exists in fact only if users take advantage of Privacy Settings. Further, wise users exercise discretion in what is posted to their sites. Perhaps more than other sites, Facebook became a place where embarrassing pictures and comments were posted. In the absence of proper use of Privacy Settings, prospective employers could see these pictures and postings, on occasion leading such a prospective employer to decide not to hire the candidate who self-disclosed or who was compromised by postings by “friends.” So be careful in your use of this site and focus your efforts on LinkedIn. Tell your “friends” not to post pictures of you or comments about you. Further, when you connect with colleagues who may have openings in their companies, you risk alienating them with your personal views on specific issues.

- **Twitter**

Twitter is a cross between a mini-blog and a social media-sharing site. Its value is in the brevity of its messages. When you perfect the skill of saying something meaningful in 140 characters, chances are your oral and written job search communications will also become more focused and concise which makes them more effective in getting the attention of the reader or listener.

Employers are also listing vacancies on Twitter. This is a cheaper and faster method of getting the word out to a targeted market of prospective employees. Generally, jobs posted on Twitter are entry level for which a company is hiring large numbers of people at one time, such as the opening of a new branch of a retail chain.

- **Computer based resources**

The computer is your best friend and your biggest enemy in your job search. You can find job vacancies on employer websites, job boards, Craig's List and similar sites and through research about targeted companies. Using specialized screening tools called "agents," you can let the computer identify potential positions. Once you target particular companies, you can research those companies, as well as the managers with whom you will interview and hopefully work. In this era of electronic libraries and communications, there is no excuse for not being able to identify potential employers or being prepared for an interview.

The computer also allows you to prepare customized resumes, cover letters, handbills and other written materials for your job search. Programs for task lists, calendars and contacts can help you organize your search so that you are more effective with the use of your time.

But the computer can be a huge time waster during your search. And I do not mean spending all day playing computer games. Some people believe that all they have to do is spend their time identifying potential jobs through computer resources and then electronically submitting applications. Often, they do this as a crutch to avoid having to make telephone calls and conduct face-to-face networking meetings with people. At the end of the day, no one gets hired without face-to-face contact. Further, you often identify jobs that are not appropriate for your education and experience and then get discouraged when none of your applications trigger a response. You are more likely to land a new job by networking and then electronically submitting a targeted cover letter and resume to a company where you have an Inside Advocate. This is a successful way to combine networking and electronic application submissions.

- **Publications**

Printed and electronic publications are excellent sources for seeking potential employers. Many industries have trade directories, as do related trade associations. Business publications prepare annual lists of public and private companies in a geographic area and lists of companies by industry. Public libraries usually have the printed versions and access to on-line publications may require an access fee.

- **People**

Good and extensive relationships are the key to a successful job search. You need to develop and cultivate large numbers of people who can advise you and connect you to other people. As your network of people expands, you have a greater likelihood of hearing about suitable job openings, being considered for such openings and landing a job.

If you are uncomfortable in social situations -- particularly meeting new people -- you need to obtain counseling and guidance on how to overcome your discomfort. There are also many simple coping mechanisms you can use. One is to accompany someone to events where there will be new people with networking potential. The presence of a friend or spouse may help you relax and give you an opportunity to be introduced to other people. Second, before beginning a day of calls to acquaintances and strangers, call a close friend and engage in a warm up call – just chatting about sports, kids, news or the weather to relax you so you are more comfortable making your day's calls. A third technique is to attend networking and job assistance programs where everyone else is in your boat. They, too, may be uncomfortable and will be as awkward as you. Fourth, smile during a telephone call. Even though the other party does not see your face, this simple act can put you in a more upbeat mood and that may positively influence your voice tone and how you respond during the call.

Bottom line, you cannot get a job without interacting with the right people so you need to improve your interpersonal skills to open doors to jobs.

CONCLUSION

The successful completion of your present job search depends on you. It is highly unlikely that someone will hear that you are out of work and offer you a job. On the other hand, your new job may occur because of unexpected contacts or events, but only if your efforts set the stage for this opportunity to arise.

Job loss is one of life's most traumatic experiences. It must be endured. But unless you are prepared to give up and suffer the consequences of not having meaningful work and financial resources, you must expend the effort to find a new position. Hopefully, this guide provides information that will help you pursue a successful job search.

APPENDIX 1

Job Search Time Line

Days Since Job Loss

Action

0 – 30

- Mourn your loss
- Exercise and attend social events to reduce stress
- Organize your job search
- Develop a schedule for each day and week
- Identify parallel paths of job alternatives
- Prepare marketing materials
- Identify target employers
- Identify networking list

30 – 60

- Start networking

90

- First reassessment
 - Reassess parallel paths
 - Revise lists of prospective employers
 - Prepare new lists of networking contacts
- Take a break

**Days Since
Job Loss**

Action

180

- Second reassessment
 - Redefine self in terms of more general skills, experience and interests
 - Identify additional parallel paths
 - Consider adding a unique path, even one beyond your comfort zone
 - Reassess your financial situation and your urgency to find a new position

270

- Third reassessment

365

- Start over with full reassessment and steps listed above

APPENDIX 2

Sample Business Card

YOUR NAME	
Experienced Consumer Product Brand Manager	
Email Address LinkedIn URL	
Home Street Address City, State, Zip Code	Mobile Telephone Number Home Telephone Number

APPENDIX 3

Sample Resume

See Next Two Pages

YOUR NAME

Street

City, State, Zip Code

Telephone number

Cell telephone number

Email address

LinkedIn Profile URL

Summary of Qualifications

Experienced consumer products brand manager with MBA from Kellogg School of Management and 10 year's experience with Procter & Gamble

Professional Experience

**2000 – 2012 **Women's Eye Cosmetics Brand Manager
Procter & Gamble****

Twelve years experience in P&G's women's cosmetics division, most recently as the Brand Manager for the highly successful "XYZ" product line.

Oversaw focus groups, packaging design, production coordination and the development of media marketing materials to launch new products that were quickly accepted by the consumer. Supervised team of 10 marketing professionals with dotted line responsibility for national women's cosmetics sales force of 90. P&L responsibility for the launch of the XYZ line of eyeliners that achieved \$50 million in sales in the first year and 10% increases in each of the next 3 years."

**1995 – 2000 **Assistant Brand Manager
Nestlé USA****

Member of Nestlé USA food products group, primarily assigned to pizza and related baked products group. Developed marketing plan for new deep-dish pizza line, coordinated focus group testing for panini sandwich line that became a \$100 million product line within 2 years of introduction.

Education

Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University,
M.B.A. 2000

Earned MBA in the Kellogg Evening Division Program while working full time at Nestlé USA

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign,
B.S. College of Business, 1995

Majored in marketing with a minor in finance. Won the QRS Award for creative marketing plan.

University of Madrid, Spain

During junior year abroad (1993 – 94) became fluent in Spanish and learned different marketing techniques and issues in the European Union.

Community Involvement

Active member of Kellogg School of Management Chicago Alumni

Member, Board of Directors, Chicago Boys & Girls Clubs

APPENDIX 4

Sample Cover Letter

Date

Ms./Mr. Name

Company

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms./Mr. Name:

I have submitted my application for a brand manager in your women's cosmetics division in the manner requested in your job posting.

My M.B.A. in marketing from Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management and B.A. in business from the University of Illinois, combined with twelve years experience with Procter & Gamble's Personal Care Division managing women's cosmetic products give me the skills to help you expand the offerings in your women's cosmetics line.

I am able to oversee focus groups, packaging design, production coordination and development of media marketing materials to launch new products that are quickly accepted by the consumer. While at P&G, I was the brand manager with P&L responsibility for the launch of the XYZ line that achieved \$50 million in sales in the first year and 10% increases in each of the next 3 years.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet in person and discuss how I can help your company achieve its goals in building its women's cosmetic line.

Very sincerely yours,

Job Applicant

APPENDIX 5

YOUR NAME		
Email address	LinkedIn Profile URL	Cell telephone number
Skilled financial analyst with a C.P.A. and M.B.A. who has previously worked in commercial banking, investment banking and REIT enterprises		
Seeking financial management position in financial services company		
B.S. University of Illinois, Urbana – Champaign, College of Business		
M.B.A. Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management		
C.P.A. State of Illinois		
2000 – 2012	Vice President Property Acquisition Analysis Employer 1, LLC	
1995 – 2000	Acquisition Specialist Employer 2, LLC	
<u>Targeted Employers</u>		
Targeted Employer A		Targeted Employer F
Targeted Employer B		Targeted Employer G
Targeted Employer C		Targeted Employer H
Targeted Employer D		Targeted Employer I
Targeted Employer E		Targeted Employer J

APPENDIX 6

Sample “Elevator Speech”

Nice to see you again. By the way, I am looking for a new position and hope you are able to give me some guidance.

As you may recall, I received my CPA on the first try after we graduated from the U of I. In 2000 I received my MBA from Kellogg. Since college, I have held a number of positions of increasing responsibility in the field of property acquisition for Employer 1 and Employer 2.

I really like the real estate investment field and hope to find a position with another firm in this industry, but I could also apply my financial analysis skills in the fields of x and y. Do you know anyone in any of these fields to whom you could introduce me?

Thank you for your help. Is there anything I can do to help you?

APPENDIX 7

Sample LinkedIn Profile

PICTURE

YOUR NAME

**Experienced Consumer Products Brand
Manager**

Greater Chicago Area/Consumer Products Company

Current: Procter & Gamble Women's Eye Cosmetics

Previous: Nestle USA

Education: MBA, Kellogg School of Management
BA, University of Illinois

Summary

Experienced consumer products brand manager with successful track record in developing and launching new products in the cosmetics and food categories.

Experience

Procter & Gamble, 2000 - 2012

Twelve years experience with Procter & Gamble's Women's Cosmetics Division, most recently as the Brand Manager for the highly successful "XYZ" product line.

Oversaw focus groups, packaging design, production coordination and the development of media marketing materials to launch new products that were quickly accepted by the consumer. Supervised team of 10 marketing professionals with dotted line responsibility for national women's cosmetics sales force of 90. P&L responsibility for the launch of the XYZ line of eyeliners that achieved \$50 million in sales in the first year and 10% increases in each of the next 3 years."

Nestlé USA, 1995 – 2000

Five years experience with Nestlé USA food products group, primarily assigned to pizza and related baked products group. Developed marketing plan for new deep-dish pizza line, coordinated focus group testing for Panini sandwich line that became a \$100 million product line within 2 years of introduction.

Skills and Expertise

Media campaign developer and manager
Focus group panel manager and interpreter
Marketing budget manager
Sales function management

Education

Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, MBA, 2000

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, BS College of Business, 1995

APPENDIX 8

Sample Thank You Note

Dear Ms./Mrs. X,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today to discuss your product manager vacancy.

I hope my ideas on how to creatively package your new product line demonstrate how I can apply my education and previous experience to help Your Company launch its new line of women's cosmetics targeting 25 - 35 year old working women.

As a result of our meeting, I am very enthused about the opportunity to work with Your Company and help you to launch this new product line. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Very sincerely yours,
Job Applicant

APPENDIX 9

Sample Reminder Email Message

Dear Ms./Mr. Name,

Best wishes for happy holidays. I hope this season finds you well and enjoying some time away from work with your fiends and family.

You may recall that when we last communicated I was seeking a new position. I am still looking for the right consumer product brand manager position. Can you think of anyone I should contact at this time? Are you aware of any changes in any of your peer or competitor companies that may suggest there are job openings?

Thank you for your help and guidance in my search. If there is anything I can do to help you at this time, please do not hesitate to ask.

Best wishes,
Job Seeker